

In the Claims:

Please cancel the previously pending claims (claims 30-42) without prejudice or waiver as to the underlying subject matter.

Please add claims 43-59 as follows:

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43. (New) A computer-implemented method for automating administrative procedures in an office, comprising:
- identifying receipt of an electronic document in a first computer directory representing a virtual office department;
 - retrieving a status of the electronic document from a database table entry associated with the electronic document; and
 - transferring the electronic document to a second computer directory representing a different virtual office department based upon the retrieved status.
44. (New) The method of claim 43, wherein the virtual office department includes at least one of a mail room, a file room, a printer, and a person's office.
45. (New) The method of claim 43, wherein the electronic document includes a transcription, the first computer directory represents a mail room, the status indicates awaiting receipt of the transcription for review, and the second computer directory represents a person's office.
46. (New) The method of claim 43, wherein the electronic document includes an administrative report, the first computer directory represents a file room, the status indicates awaiting receipt of the report for printing, and the second computer directory represents a printer.
47. (New) The method of claim 43, wherein the receipt of the electronic document is identified by monitoring the first computer directory at predetermined intervals for a presence of the electronic document.

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cont
48. (New) The method of claim 43, wherein the database table entry is associated with the electronic document via a file-naming convention.
49. (New) The method of claim 43, wherein the electronic document is transferred by a copy command.
50. (New) The method of claim 43, wherein the electronic document is transferred by a move command.
51. (New) An apparatus for automating administrative procedures in an office, comprising:
a processor; and
a memory storing instructions adapted to be executed by said processor to:
 identify receipt of an electronic document in a first computer directory representing a virtual office department;
 retrieve a status of the electronic document from a database table entry associated with the electronic document; and
 transfer the electronic document to a second computer directory representing a different virtual office department based upon the retrieved status.
52. (New) The apparatus of claim 51, wherein the virtual office department includes at least one of a mail room, a file room, a printer, and a person's office.
53. (New) The apparatus of claim 51, wherein the electronic document includes a transcription, the first computer directory represents a mail room, the status indicates awaiting receipt of the transcription for review, and the second computer directory represents a person's office.
54. (New) The apparatus of claim 51, wherein the electronic document includes an administrative report, the first computer directory represents a file room, the status indicates awaiting receipt of the report for printing, and the second computer directory represents a printer.

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cont.
55. (New) The apparatus of claim 51, wherein the receipt of the electronic document is identified by the processor monitoring the first computer directory at predetermined intervals for a presence of the electronic document.
56. (New) The apparatus of claim 51, wherein the database table entry is associated with the electronic document via a file-naming convention.
57. (New) The apparatus of claim 51, wherein the electronic document is transferred by a copy command.
58. (New) The apparatus of claim 51, wherein the electronic document is transferred by a move command.
59. (New) A computer-implemented method, comprising:
electronically sensing an arrival of an electronic document in a first computer directory representing a virtual office department;
querying a database for a status of the electronic document;
updating the status of the electronic document in the database; and
copying the electronic document to a second computer directory representing a different virtual office department based upon the status of the electronic document.

REMARKS

Claims 43-59 are pending in the present application; claims 43, 51 and 59 are the independent claims. The Examiner rejected previously pending claims 30-42 under 35 U.S.C. § 103.

Applicant thanks Examiner Akers for the telephonic interview conducted on August 13, 2002. At the direction of the Examiner, Applicant has replaced the previously pending claims with new claims to better present the invention to the Examiner.